

Secondarily, Mr. Speaker, they said we need more focus on terrorism, and I pointed out in the hearing, and I will point out to our colleagues, that it was our Committee on National Security in a bipartisan manner and this House in cooperation with the other body that included over \$200 million of additional funds for antiterrorism initiatives to properly protect our troops, and when we approved that funding this year the President and the Secretary of Defense were criticizing us, saying we were giving the military more money than what they needed. These very dollars that we plused up, \$200 million, the technology work in the area of bombs and weapons and antiterrorism, could have helped us in this situation, yet we in fact were criticized.

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What bothered me most this morning, Mr. Speaker, and should bother every American is the fact that now we know the Air Force has assigned a three-star general to look at accountability and to possibly instigate a court-martial proceeding against the general in charge of the operations in Saudi Arabia. What is so outrageous about that is that there is no one looking at the general's level above him in terms of culpability, only below him.

When I asked Secretary Perry this morning who is going to look at those above that general, including the CINC commander, including the Secretary himself and his staff, the Secretary of Defense told me that this same three-star general was tasked with that responsibility.

What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that we now have a three-star Air Force general who has been charged with investigating a four-star Air Force general who happens to be his commanding officer, who absolutely had control over these decisions. Mr. Speaker, that is outrageous. I have never heard of a fair process occurring when the person doing the investigation actually reports to the person who may in fact be a subject of the inquiry. That does not even include the Secretary himself.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his excellent question to the Secretary this morning. I was reminded, as the Secretary and others talked about responsibility, and responsibility being on the base commander, I was reminded of Stonewall Jackson's comment that defending Harpers Ferry was like trying to defend the bottom of a teacup. Somebody placed those thousands of Americans in the bottom of a teacup right next to public roads where terrorists could drive up or down in large trucks. Then we are charging the base commander with the responsibility for defending the bottom of that teacup.

I think the gentleman made exactly the right questions when he asked

whether responsibility could go up as well as down.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCINNIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to continue this discussion with my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON], concerning the national security hearings that just took place with the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Perry, and General Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and General Downing, the director of the task force assigned by the Secretary to investigate the bombing of the Khobar Towers.

I just want to ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania to go a little further into the assessment as to whether or not we should have an upward evaluation with respect to blame for this incident, as well as a downward direction, which appears to be the way it is going. It appears that blame is going to be laid at the feet of the base commander. Yet, there are a number of indications that show that this was an untenable position that this base commander was placed in.

As General Downing said this morning, he was dealt a fairly poor hand to begin with, because of a number of circumstances that he could not control.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUNTER. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I would follow up by saying, and I think he would agree, Secretary Perry's statement was an eloquent statement. I think he did accept the responsibility himself for the incident, and I appreciate his candor in that regard.

Let me go further and state that the disappointment that we feel is that what is happening right now in the Pentagon is exactly what the New York Times today editorialized on. That is, they are using one low-level enlisted person as the scapegoat, much like was done in the crash of the Ron Brown airplane. There was a lower-level enlisted person who was held accountable.

As much as we have seen time and again, there is an investigation and there is blame, but it seems as though that blame only goes one way, and that is down. What I suggested today, and what I would ask our colleagues in this body to support me on, is the need for us to have not just the investigation by the Air Force three-star general about those lower who were involved in the chain of command, including the base commander, who has been criticized, and perhaps he deserves that; but I think we also need to know who is culpable above that level.

Is it, in fact, the commander of the CINC operation who, in fact, has the ultimate responsibility for that theater, and who, under the Goldwater-Nichols reform that this body passed a few years ago, reports directly to the office of the Secretary of Defense? Were there, in fact, any preliminary warnings made? Were there, in fact, any assessments of that facility? Why was the security of that facility in Saudi Arabia less than the security currently involved in Bosnia with our troops, where we have gone to great lengths?

These are questions that need answered, not just from the general on the scene, who is being blamed for what occurred and who will likely be, as the New York Times put it, the scapegoat, but who is looking at his superiors and what their role was?

When Secretary Perry says that he is confident that this three-star Air Force general can do this assessment, I say I cannot believe that. I cannot believe that we are empowering a three-star to investigate his four-star boss, and even, if necessary, the Secretary of Defense and his underlings in the Pentagon itself.

Therefore, in thanking my colleague for yielding, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this body needs to make sure that there is an independent assessment, whether it is done by the General Accounting Office, the Justice Department, or whatever. There needs to be an independent assessment so that general who is being targeted right now and may be the subject of a court-martial can feel confident that the same look is being done of those above him.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for his statement, Mr. Speaker.

Let us review the basic facts here. This bombing took place because we had a building housing thousands of Americans literally within feet, within 85 feet, of not only a public highway, down which any terrorist could drive a truck, but also a public parking lot, where the terrorists could park a truck.

This truck, loaded with explosives, with thousands of pounds of explosives, and the Secretary estimated it at 20,000 pounds, and General Downing said between 3,000 and 8,000; but even if you say it is 20,000 pounds, for country boys that is basically half the weight of a hay truck. Any large truck can carry that amount of weight very easily.

That truck was within 85 feet. It was closer to our personnel and their living area than the distance in the House Chamber from one end of the Chamber to the other. That happened. If we were to expand our perimeter, which should have been done, or we should have vacated the site, we would have had to expand out and take out part of the Saudi public road. If we had to do that, we had to do that. But the people who placed this contingent in this indefensible area should be examined.